

CLAIMS:

1. A method for preparing a roll of film for development, the method comprising:
  - receiving a film magazine having a roll of film therein at a film unload
  - 5 station of a film processing system;
  - extracting a tongue of said roll of film from said magazine;
  - unwinding the roll of film from said magazine;
  - cutting the trailing end of the film from said magazine;
  - transporting a leading end of said film to a leader splicing apparatus of
  - 10 the film processing system; and
  - splicing a trailing end of a leader to the leading end of said film,
  - wherein a leading end of the leader is threaded at least partially through a developing
  - apparatus of the film processing system;
  - wherein during said unwinding step, the method further comprises
  - 15 inspecting the film for defects and imperfections.
2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said defects and imperfections include at least one of cuts, scratches, tears and missing perforations on said film.
- 20 3. A method according to claim 1, comprising the further steps of:
  - inspecting said film for proper length during said unwinding step; and
  - rewinding the film back into the film magazine if a defect,
  - imperfection or improper film length is detected during said inspecting step.
- 25 4. A method according to claim 1, comprising the further step of:
  - splicing a trailing end of said film to a leading end of a new section of leader.
5. A method according to claim 1, comprising the further step of:
  - 30 conveying the film to a development station adapted to develop exposed images on
  - said film.

6. A method according to claim 5, comprising the further step of controlling a temperature at the development station through a heating system.

7. A method according to claim 6, wherein said heating system  
5 includes at least a heated roller provided in a conveying path of said film.

8. A method according to claim 6, wherein said heating system includes at least a heated roller and a heated element.